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ABSTRACT

Recent research has shown that leadership and management are different and that leadership education programs have traditionally trained managers. This paper reviews the basic leadership theories, asks questions about future leadership, and examines the learning experiences that produce effective leaders. The paper's intent is not to create a theory of multidisciplinarity, but to synthesize the leadership studies of other researchers and teachers. Six theories are summarized: (1) the trait theory, viewing leadership as a natural endowment; (2) situational theory, grounded in small group research; (3) organizational theory, focusing on specific skills within typically bureaucratic organizations; (4) power theories, encompassing skills such as persuasion and conflict resolution; (5) holistic, visionary theory; and (6) ethical assessment approaches. A seventh view acknowledges all six theories and blends them within a broader context of existence and meaning. The paper next traces the evolution of leaders as specialists, and asserts the need for generalists for the new information environment. Various disciplines are briefly examined for their past contributions to leadership theory and their potential for developing a new leadership training curriculum for higher education. Appended are eight references. (MLH)

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THE MULTIDISCIPLINARITY OF LEADERSHIP

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I recently read that a leader must give guidance to unity and multiplicity with no extraneous parts. That seems an appropriate definition of the leader's role. Leadership has become one the of the most talked about topics of this decade. The literature now generally agrees that leadership and management are different and that leadership educational programs have traditionally trained managers. What will the leaders of tomorrow need to know to manage complexity in a competitive and cooperative world and how do we educate them?

The objectives of this paper are to review the basic theories of leadership, to ask questions about leadership for the future, and finally to examine the learning experiences that individuals may need to embrace to identify as developing leaders. My hope is that the questions in this paper will stimulate those of us that are responsible for creating those learning experiences to examine our own work and to ask questions of ourselves, I would also add that I have not "created" or developed a theory of multidisciplinarity of leadership. I have synthesized the work of several researchers and teachers on the topics of leadership and the development of leaders.

LEADERSHIP THEORIES

Proposals regarding leadership present a series of contradictions, and tensions. Any proposition put forward from one standpoint about leadership is almost immediately subject to qualifications on the other side of the ledger. In thinking about leadership, it seems that for every truth there is a balancing truth; in the appreciation of leadership, for everything

there is a season. What seems effective in one era is less effective in another. So, leadership is complex and difficult to assess and measure.

One confronts such issues when we begin to think about the commonplace notions of leadership--like the concept of the charismatic leader or the born leader. The following will serve as a brief review of the theories of leadership, which have been grouped into six categories.

The trait theory of leadership, rooted in biology, states that leaders are born and not made. Leadership is seen as a natural endowment; it cannot be created. There are extremes of the theory. One states that there are born leaders and the rest of us are followers. The other extreme is that everyone is a leader and that he/she leads in different ways. The Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator is based on traits with the premise that everyone can discover and nurture their own types or traits.

Situational theorists state that leadership is teachable to all that want to learn. The theory is grounded in small group research and states that different leader behavior is needed for different groups, dependent upon their maturity level and the complexity of the task, in different situations. The training in this theory revolves around diagnosis of the situation and small group process skills.

Organizational theory focuses on the specific skills within roles in the organization. This theory was developed for large hierarchial and bureaucratic organizations. For example, all of the managers in the organization need to know how to communicate. How are the communication

skills different at the entry management level, the middle management level, and at the upper level? A task analysis of the functions within each role is conducted and a matrix of skills for each behavior at different levels evolves. Often when the roles are analyzed, one is analyzing positions--administrative positions. The theory does not allow for the diagnosis of informal leadership within the organization.

There are sets of theories that have been categorized into Power theories. Power may or may not be positional. Barbara Kellerman, in an edited volume, Leadership: Multidisciplinary Perspectives, simply defined the leader as the one "who makes things happen that would not happen otherwise". If leadership is defined as making a difference, then leadership education would include the skills of persuasion; conflict analysis, utilization and resolution; political strategizing; organization and manipulation for vested interests; and the assessment of opponents and the development of winning strategies. A second power theorist says that the role of the leader is to empower people to do their own work. Skills for empowerment would include community organizing and coalition building, according to Kellerman.

Recent writings have grouped another set of theories into vision theories. The leader must be able to scan for current trends, create a vision of the future, and point people toward a meaningful future. Within these theories, the discussion of intuition and holistic systems thinking has been validated.

Ethical Assessment theories address the problem of the moral evaluation of

leadership. James MacGregor Burns insists that leadership in inherently ethical. Burns stated that the ethical use of power must be combined with a vision of human need tied to basic human aspirations.

Robert Terry, Director of the Reflective Leadership Program at the Hubert Humphrey Institute of Policy at the University of Minnesota, is in the process of developing a theory of leadership he has identified as the Seventh View of Leadership. Very simply, he acknowledges the contribution of the six subsets of theories described above, but places them in a broader context of existence and meaning. In other words, all leader behaviors take place in an environment or existence and must give meaning to the larger world.

LEADERSHIP FOR THE FUTURE

Given the theories of leadership, how do we address leadership for the future? The literature indicates that leadership and management theory are closely tied to the social and economic transitions of the era. One may study the development of leadership theory and track the trends within a society. Michael Maccoby, in The Leader, traced leadership theory with social work ethic history. His premise follows: In Seventeenth Century America, the Protestant ethic reflected Calvinist and Quaker Individualism. The social character was disciplined, distrustful, self righteous, and independent. Caution and moderation were important. From a sense of service, business evolved to a factor that could be controlled by the individual. The farmer and the craftsman were productive and

individualistic and the spirit of early America combined faith and industry with science and technology.

The beginning of the nineteenth century saw a frontier and industrial revolution. An entrepeneurial spirit explored new frontiers with daring and speculation. The first entrepeneurs were merchants, not manufacturers, who were involved in a commercial rather than an industrial context. As industrial empires evolved, the new leader was entrepeneurial and tough - to build and survive in the competitive jungle.

As the empires were built, so were hierarchial bureaucracies. Leader success was no longer entrepenurial, but depended upon administrative competencies to manage the large systems that were built. The social character adopted organizational status characterized by moving up the ladder, solving problems, and managing others. People uprooted and moved to obtain organizational status. The social character took on an aura of loneliness. Leaders, in their rootlessness, took on a sense of detachment and used persuasion, enthusiasm, and the promise of success to motivate the people they managed.

Maccoby labels the ethic of the decade of the Nineties as the ethic of interdependence. The new social character is flexible about social arrangements and willing to experiment with new relationships at work and in the family. They are committed to the development of self and others in terms of health, life long learning, adventure, and enriching experience. There is a strong need for meaning and meaningful relationships at work. No longer are directions or orders followed blindly; the new character will

give his/her best when they perceive principles of equity, concern for human dignity, and individual development based on mutual respect and voluntary cooperation. Harlan Cleveland, in The Knowledge Executive, labeled this ethic as the Fairness Revolution. The most arresting trait of information resources is that is is inherently accessible and, once accessed, unlocks other resources. In the industrial era, poverty was explained and justified by shortages of things; there just were not enough minerals, food, fibers, etc. In an information society, the physical resources are joined at center stage by information--a resource very difficult to hoard. The fairness revolution embraces life long learning, principled problem solving, and sociotechnical innovation.

A conclusion to be drawn from these and other authors is that we have developed leaders as specialists through the evolution of theory. Leaders become specialists at analyzing the situation, or at decision making/problem solving and we have developed specialized curriculums to train them. The new information environment--undermining old means of control, reducing the relevance of ownership, and placing the knowledge necessary to make decisions into everyone's dimensions--requires a non-specialized leader. Cleveland labels the task of the leader for the future as the "get it all together" role that requires a generalist.

EDUCATING LEADERS

Leadership for the future is a critical issue in an international, politicized, and technological society facing human and moral dilemmas in

new frameworks. At a recent meeting at the University of Minnesota, we were discussing yet another creation of a "Center" for study. We realized that within the last year we had created four Centers for various issues of study. We then discussed the rationale for the creation of so many centers; the current structure of a highly specialized environment will not allow us to research (and teach to) critical issues in a multidisciplinary method....and so we create a center to allow us to cross the boundaries of the disciplines. No field of study calls for a more difficult and daring crossing of disciplinary borders than does the study of leadership; no field suffers more from narrow specialization.

Social psychologists have the longest tradition of serious study about leadership. The results of their scholarship has been criticized by scholars from other disciplines stating that they have accumulated a vast amount of data; however their conclusions have been labeled as trivial. The major problem in the social psychological literature has been the lack of longitudinal data. Most of the studies have been of contemporary experiments or the collection of data about an organization as it operates at the moment. Social psychology is also criticized for not utilizing the human development literature in its study of leadership.

Psychoanalytical studies have looked to formative, early childhood experiences and a range of individual relationships to explain individual behavior in social settings.

Management has been a multidisciplined field that has used the applied social sciences to explain organizational behavior and economics in order

to understand the behavior of persons in decision making roles within corporations. The management field has been criticized for collecting case data, only on management skills. The data are important however, in that it allows an analysis between the strategies of leadership and the tactics of management.

The study of politics in political sciences has tended to study leader/follower interaction in the larger society. Many of the studies of power comes out of the political science research. The study of leadership in political science has been out of vogue for the last twenty to thirty years and has only recently returned as an interest to political science scholars.

Sociology has been more interested in explaining group behavior in relation to general theories of society than in accounting for the nature of leadership in groups. Small group sociologists have looked at the emergence and behavior of leaders in relation to followers in diverse social settings ranging from public agencies to the military.

Historical questions are critical to understanding leadership. The challenge would seem to be to test some theoretical explanations about the nature of leadership across historical periods in a manner which would explore the richness of the world and social transitions to include women and minorities, the poor, etc.

Philosophy has the longest history of interest in leadership. The study of philosophy provides an opportunity to give conceptual clarity to the

dialogue and allows the behaviors of leaders to be analyzed with regard to general moral principles to assess the ethical quality of leadership.

So, there is data from each of these disciplines, framed in their own disciplinary and empirical methods. As James McGregor Burns pointed out, "Markedly lacking in work on leadership is both empirical and theoretical follow-up that would explicate, expand, validate or perhaps invalidate major work that has already been published." Burns has posed theories that stresses the interrelationship of leadership initiatives and the raising of follower's consciousness and of follower's responsiveness in terms of hierarchies of wants, needs, hopes, expectations and demands, as well as values; the human and moral implications of helping followers rise to higher levels of moral development and the consequences in turn for their leaders; the role, in all this, of the processes of confrontation and conflict; and the consequences for better understanding of the nature of social change and historical causation. Burns points out that much of his work had to be conceptualized rather than analyzed. The posed conceptualization is certainly multidisciplinary in nature.

Can we teach leadership from a multi-disciplinary perspective? America is especially good at training experts - specialists and managers who are almost always one segment leaders. Can we train multi-segment leaders who have a global perspective?

Thomas Cronin in Thinking and Learning About Leadership, stated that students cannot be taught to be leaders. He proposed that they can be exposed to leadership, the discussion of leadership skills and styles,

strategies, and theories. Individuals can learn about the paradoxes, contradictions and ironies of leadership which are central to understanding the diversity and dilemmas of problem solving necessary to get organizations to function. Cronin summarized the needed components of a curriculum as would-be-leaders must constantly learn that they have more to give than they have ever given, no matter how much they have given.

Harlan Cleveland, in The Knowledge Executive, suggested a core curriculum for the leader in the knowledge environment with the following elements: Education in integrated brainwork: the capacity to synthesize for the solution of world problems; basic science and mathematics - elementary systems analysis and computer technology are included in this concept; education about social goals, public purposes, the costs and benefits of openness and the ethics of citizenship; a capacity for self analysis - through the study of ethnic heritage, religion and philosophy, art and literature; and the achievement of some fluency in answering the question of, "Who am I?"; some practice in negotiation, in the psychology of consultation, and in the nature of leadership in the knowledge environment. He concluded, "The leader must develop a global perspective and an attitude of personal responsibility for citizenship in an interdependent world."

There is not a question of the multi-disciplinarity of leadership. There is a question of the ability of universities to provide the experiences necessary for individuals to explore and practice the multi-disciplinarity nature of leadership. The problem of relating disciplines to advanced understanding of complex human and leader realities is rarely discussed in a rigorous forum.

It is a certainty that higher education must address the issue of educating leaders in a multidisciplinary curriculum. Those responsible for designing programs will be challenged by the existing structures and resources which serve as barriers to this purpose. If we are in a state of crisis with regard to leadership in the future, as the literature states, then we face a challenge of time. The challeges are an opportunity for those who dare to create cross-disciplined teams of researchers and educators to design a protocal for the multidisciplinarity of leadership.

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